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Double-Spy Activities of Swedish Agent Told

Convicted Colonel's Espionage for Both
Russia and U.S. Disclosed in Testimony

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WASHINGTON — During the 1950s and early 1960s Soviet espionage agents obtained U.S. data that helped Russia short-cut its weapons development process, according to Col. Stig Eric Wennerstroem, whom his native Sweden has convicted as a Soviet spy.

Wennerstroem, 57, admitted he spied for the Soviet Union when he was a Swedish air attaché in Washington from 1952 to 1957; while he was assigned in Moscow from 1949 until 1952, and after he returned to his own country as an air defense staff officer from 1957 until his arrest in 1963.

Wennerstroem's revelations — he was sentenced last June to life imprisonment — led to extensive changes in neutral Sweden's own defense arrangements.

Spied for Germans

In testimony made available by the Swedish government to the Senate subcommittee on internal security, Wennerstroem said he spied on the Russians for German friends during an earlier tour in Moscow in 1941-43 and was a double agent, providing information to both the United States and Russia, during his 1949-52 Moscow assignment.

The Senate subcommittee released the testimony Sunday.

Gradually, Wennerstroem said, his sympathies shifted to the Soviet Union because he felt Russian strategic plans were defensive in nature while the United States planned offensive warfare.

Wennerstroem said the Russians eventually gave

him the rank of major general in the Soviet spy apparatus because of results he obtained in gathering data during the Korean war era on U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization war plans.

Deliberate Lag

Wennerstroem showed how espionage information permitted the Russians to lag deliberately far behind the United States during the 1950s in most military weapons in order to concentrate on development of nuclear warheads and rockets to achieve "a balance of power in the 1960s."

During the 1950s, Wennerstroem said, information from spies convinced Soviet planners that any U.S. or NATO effort against them would be primarily strategic bombing attacks without accompanying land war.

This permitted the Russians to accord high priority to antiaircraft defense for the immediate threat and to concentrate on nuclear-armed rockets for the future. During his time in Washington, Wennerstroem told Swedish interrogators, he found no difficulty in gathering technical data normally denied foreigners.

One of his most fruitful sources, he said, was the U.S. defense industry.

As air attaché, Wennerstroem also headed a mission which purchased defense materiel for Swedish forces.

Wennerstroem said he fostered relations with the highest chiefs so that his plans were known among them. "When I subsequently met officials of lower rank, particularly in the sales bracket, I referred to these higher

chiefs and the result was that they expressed themselves in a positive way and said to the lower official concerned that he should help me in my mission as much as he could," Wennerstroem said.

Sometimes when visiting U.S. industrial plants, Wennerstroem related, he was asked if he had appropriate security clearance. He usually replied affirmatively and was rarely challenged, he said.

Technical Data

When he came to Washington, after having been in Russia, Wennerstroem said he was specifically told by the Soviet to avoid "normal" military intelligence such as personnel assignments and military strength reports, in order to concentrate on sending technical data to Russia. He was told quite frankly by a Russian general to whom he reported that there was no need for other data because the Russians had better contacts for it than he, Wennerstroem said.

"Already at the end of my Moscow period," Wennerstroem said, "people in the Soviet intelligence told me that it was of the utmost importance that the U.S.S.R. as soon as possible reach the level of the U.S.A. in the military technical respect."

"Before that time (1952) no satisfying balance existed."

Time-Saving Action

"I was then asked to attempt to assist in the acquisition of information which would hasten the development, to save time in the development from the Soviet point of view."

Wennerstroem added:

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"The Soviet state leadership had in 1949 and 1950 taken a very decisive and very bold decision."

"They had decided to stake everything on a rocket weapon with such great range that they could bring the U.S. under fire and that rocket weapon was to be provided with nuclear warheads."

"To move toward that very high goal they were forced to delay developments in a number of other military fields, military-technological fields. I should have said."

"They thus consciously entered a period of weakness lasting through the 50s and consciously took the risk so that in the 60s if they survived the 50s they would really be sure to get in a position where a real balance of power would prevail."

Helped Both Sides

"The whole of the 50s, therefore, came to be characterized by a constant striving on the Soviet side to get hold by all means of technical information, so that by means of espionage they could get hold of what they were not capable of inventing and discovering themselves in the Soviet Union."

Data he gathered for the United States while still in Russia, Wennerstroem said, indicated to the Russians when he turned it over to both sides that the United States was planning biological warfare against grain fields in the Ukraine and the Kuban district of Southern Russia — breadbasket of the Soviet Union.

When he was assigned to Washington, Wennerstroem related, he was told the Russians were not interested in U.S. biological warfare information.

"This resulted from the Soviet attitude that they were far ahead in these fields," Wennerstroem said.

Techniques Revealed

Wennerstroem outlined spy techniques — how he passed information both in Washington and Moscow to his Russian "contacts" through innocent-appearing handshakes at large gatherings, sometimes "under the noses of high-ranking American officers."

The data was contained on rolls of undeveloped film. Wennerstroem photographed technical publications and memoranda, which were then burned.

Sometimes intelligence information was passed in the cloakroom at diplomatic parties. Wennerstroem would note where his coat, containing film, was placed, then inform his Russian contact, who would retreat to the cloakroom and obtain the material from Wennerstroem's coat pockets.

While he was serving as a double agent in Moscow, Wennerstroem said, he considered American intelligence officials to be lax when they transmitted his name in a code which was broken by Russian listeners.

"The whole thing came about through an entirely routine monitoring by the Soviets," Wennerstroem said.

"Radio messages from the radio station in the American Embassy were monitored and the ciphered material was assembled and efforts made to decode it, which was possible at times.

"When it was possible to break a code, the message in that code was automatically clear, of course."

When he was arrested, Wennerstroem had completed plans to settle in Spain in retirement.

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